

General Guidelines for Writing Groups

Stephanie Dunson, PhD

For the Group

- 1) Decide on your set up, then stick with it.
- 2) Start on time and stay focused.
- 3) Always come prepared.
- 4) Divide time evenly, and stick to it.
- 5) Everyone should always bring something to share.
- 6) Become well versed in the “Summary Ways of Responding”

For the Writer

- 1) Put serious thought into naming kind of response you’d like from your readers.
- 2) Don’t be a perfectionist, and don’t be defensive.
- 3) Get the most from your readers by offering good guidelines and asking good questions.
- 4) Don’t feel compelled to address all comments offered by your readers.
- 5) Listen first; respond later.
- 6) Allow some time after the Writing Group meeting to write.

For the Responders

- 1) Honor the writer’s request for response.
- 2) Avoid “love” and “hate.”
- 3) Don’t take ownership of the writer’s work.
- 4) Look at responding as *intellectual* work rather than as *evaluative* work.
- 5) Be generous in offering feedback. (That is, give a lot of it.)
- 6) Be thorough in your consideration of the writer’s work; be forthright but fair in your response.